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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BERLIN 000296

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TAGS: PREL PGOV EUN GM

SUBJECT: GERMAN VIEWS ON MARCH 10-11 GAERC

REF: A. STATE 22352
B. BRUSSELS 0214

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JEFF RATHKE. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶11. (U) Pol-mil/external chief met with MFA European Correspondent Michael Fluegger March 7 to discuss ref A points regarding the March 10-11 EU General Affairs and External Affairs Council (GAERC) meeting. Embassy Iran watcher followed up on relevant points with the MFA Iran desk.

Western Balkans

¶12. (C) Fluegger noted that EU member state recognitions of Kosovo are proceeding well, with 19 having already recognized or on the verge of doing so. Portugal was expected to recognize next week, with Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Hungary to follow a couple of weeks later. Regarding the UNMIK points in ref A, Fluegger noted that many of these issues had already been addressed in a Quad meeting on the margins of this week's NATO Foreign Ministerial meeting in Brussels. He said Germany agreed that UNMIK needed to maintain its presence in northern Kosovo and to fulfill its mandate under UNSCR 1244. On Bosnia, Fluegger said that there would be a Council conclusion that confirms the need for continued existence of the Office of the High Representative to oversee lagging reforms.

Middle East

¶13. (C) Fluegger said he expected the discussion of the Middle East to be broader than originally envisioned, given the attack this week by Palestinian gunmen in Jerusalem. Solana will brief on his trip to the region. Germany will highlight its plans to host an international conference in Berlin in late April or early May on the Palestinian civil security sector. The intent of the conference, which was announced by German Chancellor Merkel during Israeli PM Olmert's February 12 visit to Berlin, is to encourage additional contributions to the EU-led police mission in the West Bank. Fluegger did not think Syria and Lebanon would be addressed as a separate item, but would be included in the discussion of the Middle East. He acknowledged the U.S. point on discouraging EU member state engagement of Syria, but noted that Germany and others still have "a different view."

Afghanistan

¶14. (C) Fluegger said there would be no discussion of Afghanistan at the GAERC since an informal discussion of the issue by EU foreign ministers was scheduled to occur on the margins of the EU Summit later in the week. Nevertheless, there will be an EU Council conclusion welcoming the upcoming Paris Conference and noting that EUPOL will soon reach full

operational capability. On the Paris Conference, the conclusion will stress the need for the conference to include a review of the progress in meeting the goals of the Afghanistan Compact. It should not just be a pledging exercise. On EUPOL, pol-mil/external chief emphasized the need for trainers to be deployed down to district level and noted that if this proved impossible because of EUPOL's limited mandate, the U.S. would welcome Germany contributing police trainers to CSTC-A's Focused District Development (FDD) program on a bilateral basis.

Iran

¶5. (C) Iran Desk Officer Deike Potzel told Embassy Iran Watcher March 5 that Germany is waiting for the Slovenian EU Presidency to initiate the process of forwarding the new designation lists approved in early February under existing mechanisms (ref B) through the EU approval system; she added that France and the UK plan to discuss this with Slovenia. The Presidency must communicate to holdout countries (i.e. Italy and Cyprus) that with the passage of UNSCR 1803, there is nothing holding the EU back now, she said. Germany would like to see the new designations passed at the March GAERC but, Potzel added, it appears that passage by Easter (March 23) is more realistic. She expressed some concern that member countries could throw up new roadblocks now that they have access to the text of UNSCR 1803 and could question why EU measures (particularly on Bank Melli) should be tougher than UNSCR 1803.

¶6. (C) On EU implementation of 1803, she noted that contacts in Brussels have commented that implementing 1803 into EU law could be a time-consuming and difficult affair. She also

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commented that discussions on new autonomous sanctions based on 1803 are in their "baby-shoes": an options paper has been drafted but discussion at the COMEM and CONOP level has yet to take place. There is also some discussion of whether responsibility for some aspects should lie with the Commission rather than the member states. She added that France wanted to start this discussion in April, but thought that this may be too ambitious. She stressed that Germany will pursue these three actions "one at a time" and focus first on getting the new designations passed before moving on to the other two items.

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